

HISTORY OF THE NRD SYSTEM

In 1969, Sen. Maurice Kremer introduced and the Nebraska Unicameral enacted Legislative Bill 1357 to combine Nebraska's 154 special-purpose entities into 24 Natural Resources Districts by July 1972. In 1989, the Middle Missouri NRD and the Papio NRD merged to become the Papio-Missouri River NRD resulting in today's 23 NRDs.



Those instrumental in creating the NRD legislation includes from left, Harold Sieck, Herman Link, Chet Ellis, Sen. Maurice Kremer, Gov. Norbert Tiemann, Warren Patefield, Milton Fricke and Warren Fairchild.

Natural Resources Districts were created to solve flood control, soil erosion, irrigation run-off and groundwater quantity and quality issues. While all NRDs share the 12 main responsibilities, each district sets its own priorities and develops its own programs to best serve and protect Nebraska's natural resources for future generations.

FROM THE BEGINNING...

1870s TO 1910s

- Land agents knew that stores of groundwater lay below the ground in central Nebraska and used it to attract settlers.
- Nebraskan J. Sterling Morton creates Arbor Day, the first holiday devoted to natural resources conservation.

1920s TO 1930s

- Much of Nebraska and the Great Plains devastated by the twin catastrophes of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl.
- The U.S. Soil Conservation Service established in 1935.

1940s TO 1950s

- Soil & Water Conservation Districts form county by county across Nebraska.
- Devastating floods during the 1950s cause massive property damage and spur major flood control projects across Nebraska.

1960s TO 1970s

- A spur in well drilling leads to skyrocketing groundwater pumping.
- The Nebraska Legislature creates Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts.

1980s TO 1990s

- NRDs create groundwater management plans to protect the quantity and quality of Nebraska's groundwater.
- Groundwater is commonly recognized as Nebraska's most precious natural resource due to its value to farming and urban centers.

2000s TO 2020s

- NRDs prioritize effective policies to manage and protect water.
- NRDs continue to implement programs and projects that protect lives, property and the future.

KNOW YOUR NRD

Established in 1972, Nebraska's 23 Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) are local government units involved in a variety of projects and programs to conserve and protect the state's natural resources.

Under state law, NRDs are charged with 12 main areas of responsibility:

- Erosion Prevention & Control
- Prevention of Flood Damage
- Flood Prevention & Control
- Soil Conservation
- Water Supply Development
- Water Management & Conservation
- Pollution Control
- Waste Disposal
- Drainage Improvement
- Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- Outdoor Recreation
- Forestry & Range Management

Local control is provided by a board of directors elected by voters within each district.

Across the state, NRDs offer a major source of assistance to landowners in conservation and natural resources management. When necessary, they enact regulations to protect our resources.

Today, Nebraska's unique system of locally-controlled, tax-funded, watershed-based conservation is widely admired throughout the nation.

CONTACT US

Nebraska Assoc. of Resources Districts
8100 S. 15th St., Suite B
Lincoln, NE 68512

402.471.7670 • www.nrdnet.org



Nebraska's
Natural Resources
Districts

Protecting Lives • Protecting Property • Protecting the Future